

Dr. Ambedkar As The Member of Executive Governor General Council Questions and Answers

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PART I

From 14th September 1942 to 12th April 1946

1

* **Recent Labour Strikes in Industrial Undertakings**

16. Mr. K. C. Neogy : (a) Will the Honourable Member for Labour be pleased to state whether during recent weeks there have been Labour strikes in important industrial undertakings, such as iron and steel, coal and textiles ?

(b) If so, will the Honourable Member be pleased to make a comprehensive statement dealing with the principal features of these strikes and giving in each case the issues on which the strike was declared, the number of persons involved and the duration of the strike ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: (a) Certain important industrial undertakings did cease to work for certain periods during the previous five weeks. It is not in public interest to name them or particularise them.

(b) It is not in the public interest that the full information asked for should be given in respect of those industrial undertakings which are engaged on important war work.

2. In many cases cessation of work appears to have had no connection with economic grievances; in a few others cessation of work has been more in the nature of an ordinary strike with demands for increase in wages or dearness allowance.

3. Ahmedabad was the town in which cessation of work were the longest—here there were no economic grievances apparent and the mills have not yet reopened. In Bombay on date were all mills closed, and cessation of work in those mills that did remain closed was only of short duration—here too no economic grievances were put forward. In Coimbatore where mills reopened and have closed again economic grievances were to some extent apparent.

4. Apart from the cessation of work in the textile mills of Bombay,

Ahmedabad and Coimbatore, the number of industrial undertakings which employ more than a thousand workers each and in which work was stopped for any appreciable time, for reasons not purely economic, was only about a dozen. In about ten other undertakings employing about a thousand workers each, cessations of work were of a very short duration. The number of undertakings employing less than a thousand workers in which work was stopped since the 9th August for non-political reasons was less than 20.

5. A large majority of cessations of work were in the provinces of Bombay and Bengal, only just over half a dozen occurring elsewhere.

6. The Government is not aware of any sabotage in industrial undertakings by persons who have ceased work.

7. As regards strikes from the second week of August, which are known to have occurred for purely economic reasons, these numbered about 24, only seven of the undertakings employ more than a thousand workers.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: May I ask whether it has been brought to the notice of the Government that some of the factories that closed allowed their workers to go out and paid them salaries for the day ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: Government has no definite information beyond the statement already made. But there are indications that in some cases the things that have been referred to by my Honourable friend have in all probability occurred.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know from the Honourable Member if these strikes were closed on certain terms, or were they closed of themselves, or with the help of the Government, on certain conditions ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I do not follow the question.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai : The Honourable Member has said that some of these strikes ceased. Now I am asking if they did do it on certain terms given by Government, or of their own will, or whether they ceased these strikes on any conditions ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : In some cases they went back of their own will.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know from the Honourable Member if any went on terms given by Government, and what were those terms ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : No. I am not aware of any case where Government had to give any terms to ask Labourers to resume work.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I ask, on the statement made by the Honourable Member whether the demands made by the workers of Bombay were placed before the Government ? Whether he is aware that the Bombay Girni Kamgar Union had sent to the Bombay Government more than a month ago, a statement regarding their demands about pay and other matters ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I am aware that some demands were made, but the point that I wish to emphasise is this that in no case in Bombay so far as I am aware, the making of grievances was the cause for the

stoppage of work.

Mr. N. M. **Joshi** : May I ask if the Girni Kamgar Union sent their demands to the Bombay Government, and if, after that, there were strikes, what is the point in the Honourable Member stating that no economic demands were made, or no economic demands were the cause of the strike ? How did he come by that ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I have no report from the Government of Bombay, but the information to which my Honourable Member has referred, is the information which I have got from the papers.

Mr. N. M. Joshi : May I ask the Honourable Member to enquire from the Bombay Government whether they have taken any steps to remove grievances of the Bombay textile workers and consider the demands made by the Bombay Girni Kamgar Union ?

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: May I ask the Honourable Member how many strikes there were in the textile mills of Bombay after the 8th/ 9th August ?

The Honourable **Dr. B. R. Ambedkar**: There were very few.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman : Can the Honourable Member give any indication of the pay of the Tata Iron and Steel Company workers ? Were their specific demands sent to Government ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : It is not in the interests of the public to give any information.

Mr. **K. C. Neogy** : Does the Honourable Member know that it is published in the newspapers ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: That may be so. Government will not take any responsibility.

Mr. K. C. Neogy : This report is from the Associated Press, one of the authorised agencies. It is stated that they struck work on the issue of a National Government in India.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I do not know what the Honourable Member means that the Associated Press is an authorised agency.

Mr. K. C. Neogy : I am afraid the Honourable Member does not care to read the Government communiqués.

Sardar Sant Singh : May I know whether it is a fact that all these strikes occurred after the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi and his co-workers ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : Well, I cannot give definite information, but my impression is that these strikes were not spontaneous.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra : Will the Honourable Member be pleased to state the dates on which the strikes started ? We can draw inferences therefrom.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : Where ? In what place ?

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra : In Tata's.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : As I said, I am not prepared to give

any information because it is not in the public interest to give any information.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra : I do not want the reasons for the strike or any such information ; I want the dates on which the strikes were declared.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I have stated that it will not be in the public interest to give any information.

Sardar Sant Singh : Is it a fact or not that all these strikes had occurred after the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi and does the Government believe or not that this shows the intensity of the movement and the following that Mahatma Gandhi has got in the country.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : That is an argument; it is not a question.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I ask whether the strike at Jamshedpur has ended?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I believe it has.

Mr. **President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim) : Next question.

2

Programme of Activities of the Utilisation Section of the Geological Survey of India

17. Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Labour be pleased to state whether a detailed programme has been drawn up in respect of activities of the newly started Utilisation Section of the Geological Survey of India ?

(b) What are the minerals that are now intended to be included within the purview of such activities ?

(c) Is it a fact that the Section will be concerned initially with pioneering work in respect of select minerals with the help of experts, while ultimately entrusting their exploitation to suitable commercial concerns ?

(d) Is petroleum included among the minerals with which the Section is concerned ?

(e) What practical steps have been taken so far for furtherance of the object of this Section, and in respect of what minerals and with the help of which experts, and with what ultimate object in view have such steps been taken ?

(f) Are the efforts of the Utilisation Section co-ordinated with the activities of the Organisations relating to Scientific and Industrial Research and Utilisation attached to the Commerce Department ? If so, in what manner ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : (a) Yes. The programme is, however, liable to alteration if there is urgent demand for a particular mineral.

(b) All minerals which are required for war purposes and for which there are reasonable prospects of working in India. These include sulphur, mica, tungsten or wolfram, and non-ferrous metals such as lead, zinc, copper and tin.

(c) The Utilisation Branch will with the help of experts prove deposits and

undertake small-scale mining operations which may include the operation of experimental and pilot plants for smelting, etc., up to the stage when it becomes clear that production can be undertaken by Commercial firms. It is the present intention (subject to the necessity of maintaining war production and to the circumstances of each case) that at that stage commercial development should be encouraged.

(d) No, according to present programme. (e) The Utilisation Branch has already taken steps to examine the possibility of obtaining early production of lead and zinc. The most promising lead-zinc mines in India appear to be the mines at Zawar in Udaipur State. The Government of India, acting through Mr. W. P. Cowen, late General Manager of the Mawchi mines in Burma, negotiated with the Mewar Government. They secured the cancellation on payment of compensation of the lease of the mines held by a private company, and obtained a prospecting licence from the Mewar Government. Mr. Cowen was placed in charge of the operations and began work at the end of May 1942. Operations have been planned in two stages (1) a detailed planetable survey and deep-drilling operations to be followed by (2) opening up of deposits and the erection of a pilot ore-dressing plant and smelters as soon as drilling operations establish the workability of the tode. As a result of the Survey's progress so far made it is hoped that it will be possible to obtain information regarding the " payability " of the tode earlier than was originally expected. Most of the machinery required by Mr. Cowen in the way of drilling equipment, etc. has now arrived. Two Mining Engineers, one Mechanical Engineer, two Metallurgists and three Surveyors have been appointed to assist Mr. Cowen.

Exploitation of the sulphur deposits in the extinct volcano of Koh-i-Sultan, has been taken over by the Utilisation Branch from the Supply Department and a Superintending Geologist of the Geological Survey of India is in charge of the operations.

The Branch is also engaged in an endeavour to stimulate the production of mica. A Superintending Geologist of the Geological Survey of India is in charge of a newly-formed Mica Production Section. It will be the work of the Branch to give all possible assistance to mica miners in obtaining the supplies necessary for increasing production.

Investigations have also been taken in hand by the Branch regarding wolfram, copper, etc., and a possibility regarding tin is receiving urgent consideration.

The ultimate object is to make India as self-sufficient as possible in respect of minerals which are needed for the war effort.

(f) Yes; the Director, Scientific and Industrial Research and a Senior official of the Commerce Department are members of the Advisory Body which has been set up to assist this Branch.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: May I enquire, when the Honourable

Member was referring to certain types of technical staff, if they are all British officials evacuated from Burma ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: With regard to the two mining engineers referred to in my reply to this part of the question, the information is this: the two gentlemen employed as mining engineers are Mr. Smith and Mr. Robottam.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra : Do they all come from Burma ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: They are Burmese evacuees. Under them there are two probationers ; both of them are Indians. Then the mechanical engineer is one Mr. Symes. He is also an evacuee. Office two metallurgists, one is an Indian—Mr. Narayan— and the other is Mr. Fleming. There are three surveyors with regard to sulphur; they are all Indians. I may say that the reason why we had to employ these Burmese evacuees is because they are the only people who happened to know something about mining in regard to lead and zinc. They are all taken from the Mawchi mines; and probably the Honourable Member knows that the Mawchi mines in Burma are the only mines which are lead and zinc mines. We had no expert from anywhere else. The policy of the Department is this, that while in the first place the necessity of employing Europeans who have experience in the mining of lead and zinc is inevitable, the department is taking steps that wherever a European is appointed there shall be appointed under him an Indian to be trained so that when the European vacates the Indian would be able to take charge of the department.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra : The Honourable Member said just now that Mr. Cowen Started work at the end of May 1942, and that in regard to these non-ferrous metals, zinc and lead the appointment of British officials was inevitable. When did it occur to the Government of India to have these mines explored ? Was it after the fall of Burma, so as to provide for these gentlemen who have been thrown out of employment ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I cannot give an answer to that question.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra : When did the Government first take it into their head to have these mines worked in India ? What have they been doing all this time ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : Probably quite spontaneously without reference to anything external.

Sardar Sant Singh : May I ask whether the need for working these mines was felt as a necessity to provide for the war effort, or was it to provide these evacuees from Burma with some jobs ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : Certainly not ; the supplies from Burma having ceased it was necessary for the Government of India to exploit their own resources.

Mr. K. C. Neogy : With reference to clause (d) of the question, my

Honourable friend stated that petroleum was not included among the minerals at the present moment. Has petroleum been excluded from the programme as a matter of discretion with the department or because the Government has been committed to some other agency for the development of petroleum in India ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : Not at all. My answer was that for the present the programme does not include it ; it does not mean that it is excluded from the programme altogether.

Mr. K. C. Neogy : Will the Honourable Member be surprised I were to tell him that Dr. Fox made a statement on the 6th of July, a portion of which I referred to yesterday, somewhat to that effect ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I would like to say this to my Honourable friend, that Dr. Fox does not decide the policy of the Government of India.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: But Dr. Fox may at least be expected to be truthful. Anyway, may I ask another very short question? My Honourable friend stated that the Udaipur Durbar had to be persuaded to cancel the lease in respect of lead and zinc mines in that State, which had already been granted to a private party. Before getting the Udaipur Durbar obligingly to cancel this lease, was any attempt made by the Government to find out whether an agreement could not be arrived at with that private party for the purpose of enabling whatever activities the department wanted to carry on to be carried on ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I must have notice of that question.

3

" Bevin Boys " Returned to India and their Employment

23. Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh : Will the Honourable Member for Labour please state how many " Bevin boys " have returned to India and if all of them have got employment ? If not, what are the reasons for their unemployment? Are any of them taking any part in Trade Unions?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: 149 Bevin boys have returned to India of whom 26 arrived only on the 5th September and are now being tested by an Examining Board. Of the remaining 123, 105 have been placed in employment with an average increase of salary of 145 per cent. Of the balance of 18, nine boys who arrived at the end of July have been allotted to posts and will be appointed very shortly; two who do not wish to take up factory work are being considered for Emergency Commissions—one in the Indian Army and one in the Indian Air Force ; three have refused the posts offered to them and efforts are now being made to find them other appointments ; one is being returned to his original employment on increased pay ; one is undergoing tests with a view to appointment as Welder Instructor at a training centre ; one has been earmarked for a post but cannot at present be traced; and the last man was returned from England for misconduct

without completing his training.

It is too early yet to say whether any of the returned trainees are taking part in Trade Union Affairs.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh : May I know if their unemployment is not due to the fact that they are taking part in Trade Union movements ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I do not think so. I do not see any evidence of unemployment among the trainees.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh : My question was " if all the ' Bevin boys ' have got employment " and the answer was that all the ' Bevin boys ' who have returned are not employed, that some are being tested, that some are employed that some are sent back to their old jobs. I want to put this question whether their unemployment is in any way due to the fact that they are taking interest in trade union activities.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I am sure it is not.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh : What sort of misconduct was reported against one of the ' Bevin boys ' ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I have not got the information at present. I want notice.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Has it got anything to do with his Labour activities ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I would not like to spoil the chances of this young man, did not the Government think it advisable to make enquiries about what that misconduct was ?

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh : When this case of misconduct was reported against this young man, did not the Government think it advisable to make enquiries about what that misconduct was ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I have no doubt that Government have got the information about the sort of misconduct he was found guilty of. I have not got the fact with me at present. I want notice.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad : May I know whether the ' Bevin boys ' come from the Labouring classes ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: The Department is examining that aspect of the case.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh : In view of the fact that the ' Bevin boys ' return to India after obtaining proper training in England, where is the necessity for testing them again ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: Most of the employers would not accept the word of the Government of India that they were trained, and the employer would like to satisfy himself that the man whom he is employing is properly trained. We cannot prohibit the employer from doing so.

27. Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Labour be pleased to state if he has ascertained the exact depreciation in wages in proportion to the increase in value of food-stuff and textile commodities and general cost of living ? If so, what is the ratio ?

(b) Is it not a fact that the dearness allowance and wartime bonuses granted to Railway workers is not sufficient to make up for the proportional fall or depreciation in wages ?

(c) If the answer to part (b) be in the affirmative, does the Honourable Member propose to reconsider the matter of wages of Labour on the Railways and increase their wages to an amount which would be sufficient ?

(d) Do Government propose, during the war period, to set up food and cloth stores for supplying Railway Labour with these commodities at prices commensurate with their present income and if it proves satisfactory to continue the arrangement as a permanent measure ?

(e) Will the Honourable Member be pleased to make a comparative statement of wages paid to the Railway Labour in Government controlled Railways, in private Railways (i.e. Company-managed and private State Railways) and in textile mills, jute mills and the iron and steel factories in India, and also their hours of work in a week ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : (a) The costs of living have not risen at the same rates throughout India ; there are reliable cost of living indices only for a few large towns ; the rates of wages even at one centre differ considerably for different classes of employees, and the movements in the rates of wages have been uneven at the same place and as between different places. In view of these factors, it is not possible to give a reply to the question as put by the Honourable Member. If he desires information regarding any specific class of employees at a place where there is a reliable cost of living index, I shall attempt to furnish it.

(b) No. I believe that the dearness allowance meets full the increased cost of living in the lower grades though to a diminishing extent in the higher grades.

(c) Does not arise; but I would add that recently the dearness allowance was enhanced by a considerable extent, in negotiation with the All India Railwaymen's Federation and there is no justification for a further revision at present.

(d) Grain shops have been and are being opened by a number of railways when the administration considered it necessary to do so. Commodities supplied in these shops are sold at prices not exceeding the control prices fixed by Provincial governments. It is proposed to run these shops during the war as long as the necessity for them exists. No cloth shops have yet been opened on the Railways.

(e) There is no known basis for making such a wide comparison ; each factory employs specialised Labour and comparison is difficult.

Mr. **Muhammad Nauman**: May I know from the Honourable Member whether it is the contention of government that there has been no rise in price since 1939 ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : That is not the contention of the Government. All that the Government say is that there is no uniformity in rise.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman : There is some uniformity taking the minimum. Are the Government not prepared to accept the minimum rise in all commodities, which is above 50 per cent ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I am prepared to say that there is rise, but I cannot say that the percentage is as high as the Honourable Member suggests.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman : Will the Government make enquiries and find out whether the allegation is correct ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I cannot commit myself to making enquiries, which will require additional staff and time which Government may not be able to spare.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman : The Government ought to have had this information since three years have elapsed.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Adur Rahim) : The Honourable Member is expressing an opinion.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: May I ask if the dearness allowance mentioned in this question will be extended to other departments of the Government of India, especially post office ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : This question should be addressed to the appropriate department.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad : This question refers to railways, but my Honourable friend has taken up this question as one concerning Labour. I should like to know whether the Labour conditions mentioned with regard to railways will be extended to Labour conditions in other departments ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I think there has been an increase in dearness allowance given to all employees in the Government of India.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman : With reference to part (d), may I know whether Government have taken any pains to compare the control rates at which they are selling now and the rates at which the commodities were being sold in 1939 and 1940 ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : It is quite unnecessary to make any such comparison of percentage at all.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman : Otherwise, you do not know what percentage of dearness allowance should be given.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : It is sufficient for Government purposes to know that there is an increase. In that case they may consider whether or not to increase the allowance.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi : What are the places where the rise in

prices is the lowest ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I want notice.

* * *

5

Representation of Scheduled Castes in the Civil Pioneer Units

Rao Bahadur N. Sivaraj : (a) Will the Honourable the Labour Member please state how many battalions of Civil Pioneer Force have been raised in the different Provinces ?

(b) to what extent are the Scheduled Castes represented in the ranks and as officers ?

(c) if the Scheduled Castes are not represented will he please state the reasons therefor ?

(d) what steps do Government propose to take to secure their proper representation ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: (a) Twelve units of the Civil Pioneer Force have been sanctioned in the First instance, as under :

Bengal-3, Madras-2, Bihar-1, Bombay-1, C. P. and Berar-1, N.W.F.P.-1, Orissa-1, Punjab-1, U.P.-1.

Most of these units are still in the process of forming. Seven additional units have recently been sanctioned, as under:

Bengal-3, Bombay-1, C. P.-1, Madras-2.

Recruitment for these has now commenced.

(b) At present Scheduled Castes are represented in the Civil Pioneer Force as under

Bengal 2 per cent.

Bombay 10.5 per cent.

C. P. and Berar 26 per cent.

Punjab 32 per cent.

U. P. 20 per cent.

Madras figure not known.

N.W.F.P. All Muhammadans.

These figures are liable to fluctuate as further recruits are enrolled. At present so far as information goes there is only 1 officer classed as Scheduled Caste.

(c) The raising of Civil Pioneer Force Units under Ordinance No. X of 1942 was entrusted to Provincial Governments who therefore become responsible for deciding on the composition of their respective units.

(d) The Government of India addressed all Provincial Governments regarding the percentage of Scheduled castes to be recruited in future and directing that the percentage both of officers and men should be up to the percentage of Scheduled castes in the province and that where this percentage had not been previously met it should be made up in recruitment to subsequent units.

Mr. N. M. Joshi : May I ask what is the function of this Civil Pioneer Force ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : The function of the Civil Pioneer Force is more or less analogous to that of the Fire Brigade. When there is an air raid and property is destroyed, the Civil Pioneer Force will come into operation and do rescue work.

6

**Prescribed Government Conditions for Contractors as regards
Payment of Wages, etc., to their Employees**

Rao Bahadur N. Sivaraj: Will the Honourable the Labour Member please state if he is aware that in Western Countries conditions have been prescribed to be observed by the contractors in the matter of wages and benefits to their employees ; if so, whether the Government of India have prescribed any such conditions for the contractors in India ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: Yes. In certain western countries contracts require that contractors should observe certain Labour conditions in respect of such matters as hours of work, wages and conditions generally. The Government of India have prescribed in the case of Central Public Works Department contracts that the contractor should pay his Labourers not less than the wages paid for similar work in the neighbourhood.

Rao Bahadur N. Sivaraj : What steps, if any, are taken by the Government to enforce this clause in the contract ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I cannot say offhand, but I will make inquiries and let the Honourable Member know.

Mr. N. M. **Joshi**: May I ask whether this condition about fair conditions to be given by contractors applies to the other Departments of the Government of India such as the contractors of the Supply Department ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : If my Honourable friend will give me notice I will make inquiries.

Mr. N. M. **Joshi**: The question was about contractors taking Government contracts, not only the Public Works Department. The Honourable Member only answered for the Public Works Department. He should have answered for the Government of India.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : That question should be addressed to the Supply Department.

Mr. N. M. Joshi : May I ask whether there is a central Government of India or only a Government of India divided into ten or eleven or twelve members ?

Mr. **President** (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim) : The Honourable Member knows that questions have to be addressed to the Departments concerned.

7

Bevin Boys Selected from India for Training in the United Kingdom

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: (a) Will the Honourable the Labour Member be

pleased to state what is the total number of Bevin Boys selected by the Government of India for training in the United Kingdom ? In how many batches were they sent ? How many of those were (i) Muslims, (ii) persons belonging to scheduled caste, in each batch, separately ?

(b) What minimum qualifications did the Government prescribe for selection ? Were they all manual Labourers in the factories ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : (a) 304 Bevin trainees have so far been selected for training in the United Kingdom. Five batches have actually been sent so far, one of 54 and four of 50 each. A tabular table is given below, showing the communal composition of the five batches already sent and the sixth batch now selected. It shows that 50 Muslims were sent out of 304.

	1 st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	Total
Hindus	... 21	25	27	22	22	3	162
Muslims	... 13	9	8	8	8	4	50
Anglo-Indians	... 4	5	4	3	7	3	26
Indian Christians	... 4	7	6	8	4	4	33
Parsis	... 6	3	3	3	1	3	19
Sikhs	... 2	1	2	3	4	2	14
	50	50	50	50	50	50	304
			0	4	0	0	

No information is available as to the number of Scheduled Caste trainees in the first 5 batches. Particulars in the case of the 6th batch are awaited.

(b) The following are the minimum qualifications required. Candidates—

(1) must be young and healthy but not below the age of eighteen ;

(2) must be intelligent, able to read, write and do simple calculations, and possess manual dexterity and a sufficient knowledge of English to understand and make themselves understood.

(3) must belong to one of the engineering trades preferably fitting, turning or matching ;

(4) must have had a minimum of three years' experience of factory work and have given proof of intelligence and adaptability ; and

(5) must be medically fit and free from all traces of tuberculosis. A limited number of students were included in the first two batches, but it was then decided to restrict the Scheme to men of the working classes and that rule has since been enforced.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir : Is it a fact that some of these young boys have not found employment ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : My information is that a great many have found employment.

Babu Baijnath Bajoria : How many have returned ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : 149, I believe.

Babu Baijnath Bajoria : What is the test of intelligence to which the Honourable Member has referred ?

Sir Cowasji Jehangir : Is it a fact that some of these boys have been offered less wages than they were earning before they left for this training ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : Not to my knowledge.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir : Will the Honourable Member inquire as to how many are unemployed ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : Very few, to my knowledge, are unemployed.

Mr. **Jamnadas M. Mehta** : Were they sent under a guarantee of employment ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : No guarantee of employment.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad : Will Government consider the employment of Bevin boys for training as war technicians ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I will consider that.

8

Recruitment of Scheduled Caste Boys under the Bevin Scheme

Rao Bahadur N. Sivaraj: (a) Will the Honourable the Labour Member please state the number of scheduled castes boys recruited under the Bevin Scheme ?

(b) What steps do Government propose to take to secure adequate representation of these castes ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: (a) No particulars were kept in respect of the First five batches. Particulars are being collected about the sixth batch which will sail shortly and statistics will be kept of all future batches.

(b) Candidates for training under the scheme are selected by the National Service Tribunals and Government have suggested to the Chairmen of these Tribunals that when making their selections they should associate with the Tribunal non-officials of influence belonging to the Scheduled Castes preferably members of the total Legislature.

9

Approved Contractors of the Central Public Works Department

Rao Bahadur N. Sivaraj: (a) Will the Honourable the Labour Member please State the total number of contractors on the approved list of the Central Public Works Department according to classes ?

(b) How many of them belong to scheduled castes ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : (a) The total number of contractors on the approved list of the Central Public Works Department is 1,171, according to the classification given below :—

1. Building contractors—		
Class I (No limit)	...	115
Class II (below Rs. 50,000)	...	236
Class III (below Rs. 20,000)	...	620
Total		971

2. Electrical Contractors